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## **FY 2005 Vermont Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Step-By-Step Process**

1) Producer inquires about GRP at the local USDA Service Center.:

**Farm Service Agency (FSA)** or **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** field staff will assist interested producers in the completion of an AD-1153, Application for Long-Term Contracted Assistance, form. The NRCS DC or FSA CED will also sign the AD-1153.

All GRP applications received by NRCS will be delivered to the local **FSA Office**.

- ❑ FSA and/or NRCS Field staff will attach maps of the land being offered for GRP to the application and keep a log of all GRP applications.
- ❑ **FSA** field staff will conduct person determination, take Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) certifications and perform compliance associated with such compliance on the CCC-526.

**NOTE:** The **Producer** will need to be in compliance and have an **AD-1026** on file (Certification Of Compliance with the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985). If an AD-1026 is not on file, the producer should consult with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for the necessary steps.

2) Once maps are attached to the logged AD-1153 form and all Compliance and AGI eligibility is confirmed, **FSA** field staff will refer all AD-1153 forms to the local **NRCS** field staff for land eligibility determinations and ranking.

- ❑ If necessary, NRCS field staff will conduct a field visit and/or work with the applicant to Determine land eligibility and for completion of the GRP Ranking Sheet.

3) **NRCS** will forward completed Ranking Sheets and FY 04 Program Application Information Worksheets to the local **FSA** office.

- ❑ NRCS will enter the following information in the log: name, date, total acres in the offer, and total cost of the project (= total acres x rental rate x length of agreement + restoration costs).

4) All completed GRP electronic logs and all completed and ranked GRP applications (AD-1153, GRP Ranking Sheets) will be e-mailed by the local NRCS Office to the Vermont NRCS ASTC - Programs at the NRCS State Office by 4:00 p.m. on March 4, 2005.

5) The **NRCS and FSA State Office Program Specialists** will review all completed GRP application packages for funding selection based on ranking.

- ❑ NRCS will notify the GRP applicants and NRCS and FSA field staff of the status of all GRP applications.

(1) **Selected Applicants** will receive further instructions to contact the local NRCS office.

(2) **Non-Selected Applicants** will be notified of future consideration.

- For selected applicants, if an acceptable Conservation Plan that coincides with GRP Policies and the approved Ranking Score is not already in the producer's case file, **NRCS** field staff will complete or update the Conservation Plan. The Conservation Plan must be in accordance with the National Planning Procedures Handbook, standards and

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specifications in the FOTG, and Vermont GRP Policies (including appropriate language for haying/mowing and practices that meet the approved Ranking Score) for funded GRP applications.

- All selected applicants will work with **NRCS** to complete the required Conservation Plan **and FSA** to complete and sign:
  - For Rental Agreements: a CCC-920, Grassland Reserve Program Contract, and sign the Conservation Plan, if needed. **USDA field staff will not sign the CCC-920.**
  - All CCC-920 forms and plans signed by the landowner shall be forwarded to the **Local FSA Office by 4:00 p.m. on April 4, 2004** for final approval. FSA Will develop and sign all Rental Agreement Contracts
  - For Easements : An appraisal must be ordered, Baseline Inventory Report and Grassland Reserve Program Conservation Easement Deed developed for the acres under easement. (Additional guidance will be provided as received.)

**6) All Selected Applicants** and applicable **FSA** and **NRCS** field staff will be notified when the contract is approved and practice implementation may commence.

- The FSA State Office will allocate the necessary funds to the County Office.
- FSA field staff will enter approved CCC-920s in the system 36.